

Twins

by Sarahjane

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Summary: Two children at the Jedi Temple fall prey to a deadly virus.

1. Part 1

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>
Twins

>Part 1

>Ben and Becca crept through the halls of the Jedi Temple. It was very late, but the twins were wide-awake and excited as they snuck through the sleeping temple, holding hands to give them added strength. Things were so much easier when the twins did them together.

>They made it into their favorite room--the Room of a Thousand Fountains. The twins loved to go there. Being from a planet where large bodies of water were scarce, they were fascinated by the fountains, pools, and, especially, the waterfall that tumbled down onto treacherous rocks.

>Once inside, the children were free to be as loud as they wished. They ran through the room, peering into the crystal waters, splashing each other, and chasing each other, filling the room with the golden sound of their laughter.

>Hours later, though, Becca stopped running around.

>"What's wrong, Becca?"

>She frowned. "Dizzy, Benny."

>"Me too."

>The twins watched as the room spun around and around and then pitched forward to lie on the green grass.

>*****

>Qui-Gon Jinn slowly walked through the temple. He loved coming back

to the temple whenever he did not have to go on a mission, partly because he liked to see that Xanatos, a young boy he had brought to the temple, was doing well (he planned to take Xanatos on as his Padawan as soon as the boy was ready), and partly because he simple enjoyed returning to the place where he had once lived as a child.

>He paused before the door to the Room of a Thousand Fountains. The room was currently quarantined, but Qui-Gon had already been inoculated against the disease early that day. A Master and her Padawan had returned to the temple carrying the disease. They were currently quarantined in the top part of the temple with the healers. Meanwhile, all Padawans, Knights, and Masters had been vaccinated against the disease, and the Room of a Thousand Fountains had been quarantined since the two had collapsed in that room. The Initiates would be vaccinated tomorrow, which was why the room was off limits.

>He decided to go into the room anyway. He enjoyed being there and found the room to be very peaceful and calming.

>Once inside, however, he sensed that something was not right. Following his instincts, he ran to where the twins lay.

>He knelt beside their limp bodies. Although they were unconscious, they were still breathing, albeit slowly and raggedly.

>Qui-Gon was unsure as to what to do. If he took them to the healers, he could expose all of the other Initiates to the disease. But if he left the twins there and got help, they could die before he came back.

>The little boy opened his eyes for a moment and gave Qui-Gon a pleading glance. He moaned slightly and closed his eyes again.

>That was all Qui-Gon needed. He picked up the twins and carried them to the healers.

>*****

>Although it was after midnight, Qui-Gon did not go to sleep after he took the twins to the healers. Instead he watched the two twins, lying in two cots side by side, hands touching, struggling to breathe.

>Cartox's Disease was certainly a cruel one. Already their fevers were 105Â° and still rising. Their faces were flushed with fever, their eyes were closed, and their breathing was harsh and labored. Ben's left hand and Becca's right were clasped together as if they were trying to draw strength from each other. Good luck. They were both pretty sick, and he hated that. They shouldn't be this sick. They should be free to run through the Room of a Thousand Fountains. They shouldn't be here, fighting for their lives. He hated to hear the sounds of their small chests struggling to rise and fall.

>He looked at the monitors that were attached to each twin. They mirrored each other with eerie symmetry; their temperatures rose together, their heartbeats faltered together, and their brain waves skipped across the screen together.

>Master Yoda walked over to him. "Grateful we are that you found the twins," he said. "Rest you should now."

>"Who are they?" he asked, gazing down on their youthful faces, drawn with pain.

>"Twins they are: Ben and Becca." He too gazed at them. "Young they are--only five. Came to the temple recently they did. Love the gardens they do." He frowned slightly. "Unable to visit the gardens today they were. Decided to go by themselves they did." He glanced at Qui-Gon. "Rest you must," he scolded. "Late it is."

>"I'm not tired."

>Yoda cocked his head to one side. "Wish to stay with the twins you do. Why? Know them you do not."

>Qui-Gon was at a loss for words. "I-I'm not exactly sure, Master. I just feel as if...as if there is some sort of connection with them. Besides," he added, "I want to see if they are all right."

>Yoda harrumphed. "Fine. Stay you will. Rest I will now. In the morning see you I will."

>"Good night, Master," Qui-Gon answered distractedly as the Jedi walked out of the room.

>He has the right idea, Qui-Gon decided, but I really don't want to leave them. Maybe I'll just rest my eyes for a moment...

>*****

>"What are you doing here?"

>Qui-Gon awoke, shocked out of unconsciousness by the question.

"What?" he moaned groggily.

>"Shhh!" she admonished him. "You'll wake the children."

>"Sorry." He lowered his voice to a whisper. "Who are you?"

>"I'm Jodie Lyen, one of the healers. Who are you and what are you doing here?"

>"I'm Qui-Gon Jinn," he said, sitting up. He realized that he had fallen asleep with his head on the end of the twins' beds. "I found the children last night, and I was too worried about them to leave."

>"Oh, well then, I guess you don't have to leave." She looked at the children and smiled affectionately, softening the look she had just given him. "They are sweet, aren't they?"

>"Well, actually, I've never met them."

>"Really? Well, they certainly are a handful! They are sweet, though, and very affectionate." She sighed sadly. "I was so sad to hear that they were ill. I hope they get better. So many people are waiting to hear how they are doing." She glanced at him, giving him a look that he couldn't quite interpret. "You don't know them, but almost everyone else does. They are very friendly, and they've definitely made a name for themselves here."

>"Hopefully they'll get better."

>"Hopefully, yes, but we both know how serious Cartox's Disease is." She checked her watch. "Speaking of which, I need to start immunizing the children."

>"I hope that I didn't expose anyone when I brought them here last night."

>She dismissed his concern with a wave of her hand. "Oh, I doubt that. This is more routine than anything." She sighed again as she gathered together some vials of medicine. "I hope that nothing happens to the twins while I am away."

>The words came out of his mouth before he could stop them. "I'll watch them."

>She stopped to look at him. "Really? Don't you want to rest? I can get someone else to watch them."

>"No, don't bother. I don't mind." Besides, he thought, I probably couldn't leave even if I tried. Something is definitely keeping me by their sides.

>"Okay then. Thanks!" she waved to him as she left.

>He waved back; then once again he turned his attention to the twins.

>*****

>The first few hours of Cartox's Disease are the most critical. As

the virus sweeps through the body, the temperature rises uncontrollably high. The virus slowly destroys the body, starting with parts of the brain and the lungs and ending with the heart. Patients can die suddenly of Cartox's Disease, even with treatment.
--Jedi Temple Medical Dictionary, S.v. "Cartox's Disease"

>
Qui-Gon watched the children, then glanced back at the monitors. To his shock, the lines were slightly different. Was it his imagination? No, there was a definite deviation, however slight.

>
By the time Jodie came back, Ben's temperature was down slightly, and his heart and brain activity were improved, albeit only by a little.

>
"This is strange," she murmured. "Ben is doing better, but he hasn't improved very much."

>
"What about Becca?"

>
"She's pretty much the same, although she may be going downhill, or she may be getting better--we really can't tell at this point." She gave him a frustrated look. "We just have to wait and see."

>
He nodded. "All right."

>
"I didn't mean you per se," she explained. "You need to rest. You look exhausted."

>
"I'm fine," he insisted.

>
It took quite a bit of persuading, but he finally convinced her to go to dinner while he watched them. Then she would take over while he ate and rested. "I'll call you if anything changes," he promised as she left the room reluctantly.

>

>
Qui-Gon was frantic.

>
He had no idea where Jodie was. She was probably still eating. Great, just great, he thought.

>
He glanced at the monitor. Nothing had changed. Becca was at the edge of death, and Ben was beginning to lose all the progress he had made. He was unsure as to what was causing his decline.

>
Suddenly it became clear to him. Of course, he thought. He had overheard Master Yoda and Master Windu talking. The Kenobi twins were very strong in the Force. Somehow, he decided, they must be holding on to each other to prevent Becca from dying.

>
He glanced at the monitor. It didn't seem to be helping much. Becca was definitely dying, and now Ben would die as well.

>
He glanced down at them. He couldn't bear the thought of allowing both of them to die.

>
Suddenly he thought of something. Before he could talk himself out of it, he dove into their minds.

>

>
He felt as if he were swimming in a clear lake. Below him were the twins, clinging to each others hands; Ben's left hand and Becca's right were intertwined as they floated gently in the water above a whirlpool. Although Ben gripped his sister's hand tightly, she was still being pulled in, and now she was taking him as well.

>
He felt himself move towards them. Then, without allowing himself to hesitate, he jerked them apart.

>

>
He lived a lifetime in that moment.

>
Ben and Becca sit at a kitchen table. A pretty cake is in front of them. Their mother cuts them each a piece, and the two three-year-olds dive into it, not bothering with silverware. Ben finishes his slice first and looks sad, so Becca gives him the last

bite of hers. He breaks off half of it, and the two share the chocolate cake, smiling, not caring about the chocolate crumbs and chocolate frosting covering their mouths.

>
Ben hears his sister cry out in the middle of the night. He reaches over the gap between their beds and squeezes her hand, and she squeezes back. They hold hands until long after they are both asleep.

>
Becca pricks her finger. Ben does so too. They press the bloody spots together. "Cross my heart, hope to die," they chant together. "What should we promise?" asks Becca. "Um...promise that we won't die ever," Ben says. "That's impossible," Becca replies. "Okay, then, at least until we're as old as Master Yoda." Becca giggles. To the two five-year-olds, Master Yoda seems to be ancient. "Okay," she agrees. "And we'll die at the same time so that we'll never ever be apart." "Okay." "Promise?" "Promise."

>
The twins run through the Room of a Thousand Fountains. They love it here, and, even though it is not allowed, they cannot help but come here tonight because they couldn't play there during the day. They run and laugh for a long time, but then they get dizzy and fall asleep for a very long time...

>

>
"Qui-Gon!"

>
He moaned slightly. Why didn't they just let him sleep?

>
"Qui-Gon! You have to wake up now!"

>
He slowly blinked his eyes open. "What happened?"

>
Jodie frowned at him. "I told you to tell me if something bad happened! What were you thinking?!"

>
It all came back to him. "I did what I had to do. Becca was dying, but there was no reason that Ben had to as well."

>
"So you took it upon yourself to decide their fate?" Her voice was so full of rage that he involuntarily winced.

>
"Look, I did what I had to do. If I hadn't severed their link, there would have been no chance that either would live."

>
"Enough," Master Windu commanded. "That is quite enough out of both of you. You are both right. Qui-Gon should not have acted on his own, but it was the boy's only chance for survival."

>
"What about Becca? She died alone, without her brother, screaming for him!" Her eyes blazed with anger.

>
"So...so Ben is alive?" Qui-Gon asked, trying to assimilate what she was saying.

>
Jodie threw up her hands in disgust, but Windu only nodded. "It was pretty close for a while. Right after you severed their link, we thought that all *three* of you would be goners. Luckily, you stabilized, and Ben slowly started improving."

>
"Three?"

>
Windu nodded. "You were pretty sick there too for a minute."

>
He shook his head to clear away the cobwebs. "Can I see him?"

>
"Of course."

>
He led his friend to Ben's bedside. The boy was pale and thin, with dark shadows under his eyes. Nevertheless, he would survive.

>
"The Jedi Council renamed him," Windu told him, "after his sister died. They changed his name to symbolize his rebirth."

>
Qui-Gon nodded. It was only fitting. Ben was gone forever with his twin sister, Becca. Now he would be... "What is his name?"

>
"Obi-Wan. Obi-Wan Kenobi."
>
"Obi-Wan," Qui-Gon repeated, staring at the boy. "Will he...was there any brain damage?"
>
"A little," Windu nodded. "He probably won't remember anything." He glanced at Qui-Gon. "We will have to tell him all about his past: his family, his friends..."
>
Qui-Gon nodded. "What will you tell him about...?"

>
"...Becca?" he finished. "Nothing. The Council has decided that he is not to be told about his sister. He will never remember her, so we might as well spare him that pain."
>
No wonder Jodie looked so angry. Doubtlessly she was furious that Becca would be erased from everyone's mind so quickly. To be honest, he did not like the idea either, but they did have a point. Perhaps it was better to let his sister fade from thought in order to spare the boy that pain.
>
Looking at the sleeping child, he recalled the images that he had seen. Perhaps, though, he should be told about his sister, who had loved him so much and whom he in return had loved so dearly.

>
Looking down at that face, though, he could not bring himself to either lie or to bring the boy any more heartache.
>
He turned from the room and left, intending to never cross paths with Obi-Wan Kenobi again.

2. Part 2

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>
Twins

>Part 2

>Obi-Wan Kenobi's eyes flew open, and he sat up, gasping and trying to clear his head.

>The dream had come again. He shook his head slightly, trying to recall the images that were becoming dimmer and dimmer every second.

>A garden...yes, the Room of a Thousand Fountains...a little girl...holding his hand, walking through the halls...running around, laughing, playing...dizzy, so dizzy...

>He shook his head again. That same dream had plagued him as long as he could remember, although it had been coming more frequently as of late. Always it was the same: the room, the girl, the dizziness, and his painful jolt back into reality.

>Outside of his room he could hear Qui-Gon get up and walk to the door. He lay back down and tried to calm himself.

>"Padawan, are you all right?"

>"Yes, Master, I...I just had a bad dream."

>There was a brief pause. Then he said, "But you are all right now?"

>"Yes Master."

>"All right. Good night, Obi-Wan."

>"Good night, Master."

>Once he had left, Obi-Wan wondered why he did not tell Qui-Gon about

the dream. He wanted to, put...well, it seemed childish, having nightmares at his age. He was fifteen! Little children had bad dreams, but teenagers weren't supposed to awake night after night, gasping for air all because of a stupid dream!

>At least he could get some more sleep that night. The dream never came more than once per night--something for which he was very grateful.

>Obi-Wan rolled over and sunk into a dreamless sleep.

>*****

>"Becca!"

>Qui-Gon sat up as he heard Obi-Wan's cry. Not again, he thought. He was very worried. Obi-Wan had been dreaming about his sister's death since he was five years old, but the dream came every night now. Part of him wanted to take the boy to the healer's, but another part recoiled at the idea. At the healer's, the memory could be pulled from his mind completely, allowing him to remember. With that, though, would come the pain that Qui-Gon had tried to spare him for ten years.

>He got out of bed and walked into Obi-Wan's room. "Padawan, are you all right?"

>"Yes, Master, I...I just had a bad dream."

>Qui-Gon wanted to tell him something; he wanted to ask him about the dream; he wanted to tell him about Becca. Instead all he said was, "But you are all right now?"

>"Yes Master."

>"All right. Good night, Obi-Wan."

>"Good night, Master."

>*****

>"Hello, Qui-Gon. What are you doing up so late?"

>Qui-Gon turned to the speaker. "Hello, Mace. I could ask you the same thing. Problems with the Council keeping you up again?"

>"You could say that. Anyway, what about you?"

>"Obi-Wan had a nightmare." He turned away from his friend and stared at the small meadow by the waterfall in the Room of a Thousand Fountains. "I found them right here. I couldn't sleep so I came in here and there they were."

>Uninvited, Mace sat down. "I take it, then, that this dream involved Becca."

>He nodded. "I haven't asked him, but I heard him cry out for her in his sleep."

>"Again? This is...what, the third time this week?"

>"Fourth."

>Mace gave a low whistle. "Wow." He hesitated before asking, "Do you think that he's starting to remember?"

>"Maybe."

>"Shouldn't you talk to him about it?"

>"I should, but..."

>"Ah. Okay. I understand. That would involve explaining to him...well, everything."

>Qui-Gon nodded. *That* was the hard part. How could he possibly explain everything to him? Sometimes he couldn't even rationalize his decision to himself.

>He closed his eyes. He could remember so many things...things that Becca had shared only with her brother until Qui-Gon had touched their minds and ripped them apart. It seemed strange to him that he could remember those things while Obi-Wan could not. Even though he felt like an intruder, he treasured those memories. Without them,

Becca truly would have faded into nothingness.

>Mace's words shocked him out of his reverie. "So, what are you going to do?"

>He opened his eyes and shrugged. "I'm not sure."

>"Sure you are," came a voice from behind. "What you must do you know."

>"Well, yes, Master Yoda, but it's not that simple."

>"Simple! Simple it is, Qui-Gon! The truth you must tell him. Owe it to him you do." He closed his eyes briefly. "Owe it to Becca you do too."

>Qui-Gon thought for only a short time before standing up. "Thank you for your advice, Master Yoda," he said. "See you later, Mace."

>"Bye, Qui-Gon," he called. To Master Yoda he said, "Well, there he goes into the lion's den." He paused before continuing. "Do you really think that Obi-Wan will take the news well?"

>"Ha!" Yoda snorted. "Say this I did not. Take it well the boy will not. Hurt and angry he will be. But tell him Qui-Gon must. The only way it is."

>*****

>Obi-Wan Kenobi was lying on his bed, staring up at the ceiling and trying to get a little sleep. He was exhausted, yet all he could do was lie awake under the blankets and sheets which had been twisted badly by his body as he had tossed and turned during the night.

>Qui-Gon walked in. "Obi-Wan?"

>He sat up. "Yes, Master?"

>He sat on the edge of the rumpled bed. "Obi-Wan, I have something very important to tell you."

>"What is it?" His trusting face shone back at Qui-Gon.

>"Obi-Wan, I have not been completely honest with you about your dreams." Steeling himself, he pushed on. "They are not dreams; they are memories."

>Obi-Wan tried to interrupt, but Qui-Gon pushed forward. "When you were five years old, you were stricken with Cartox's Disease. You and...and your twin sister. You recovered but lost your memory. She...she died."

>Obi-Wan was stunned. "My...my sister?" the startled boy managed to reply.

>"Yes, your twin sister Becca. You two were very close but..."

>Suddenly, Obi-Wan felt himself falling, falling, falling...

>Ben and Becca run through the Room of a Thousand Fountains. They love it here, and, even though it is not allowed, they cannot help but come here tonight because they couldn't play there during the day. They run and laugh for a long time, but then they get dizzy and fall asleep for a very long time...

>...and Ben feels hot all over, and he wants to cry out, but he can't, all he can do is lie there and burn alive...

>...and he can feel Becca in his mind, and suddenly the heat is gone, but Becca is falling, and suddenly they are floating in a lake, and she is being pulled under. He tries to hold on to her, but now both of them are falling...

>...and then a tall man swims near them and pulls them apart...

>...and he can see his whole life with Becca: a birthday cake, a midnight bit of comfort, a promise, and then the running through the room and the dizziness...

>Obi-Wan opened eyes that he had not even realized he had closed.

>Qui-Gon looked at him. "Are you all right?"

>"You killed her!" The accusation made Qui-Gon flinch, but Obi-Wan did not even notice it. "You killed her!"

>"I did not kill her, Padawan--I saved you. She could not be saved. She was too sick."

>"Then I should have died with her," he sobbed, "the way she would have for me!"

>"I saved your life! I didn't want you to die unnecessarily."

>"So she died alone! She died screaming for me, and I couldn't even answer!" Tears ran down his face as the shock of his sister's death hit him for the first time. "You should have just let me die!" he cried out, leaping from the bed and running from the room, ignoring Qui-Gon's pleas to listen to him.

>*****

>In the Room of a Thousand Fountains, Obi-Wan lay on the grass by the waterfall with his knees drawn close to his chest. The terrible sobs which had overtaken him were finally slowing, and he sat up.

>Why had Qui-Gon done that? Why had he interfered? Because of Qui-Gon, his sister was gone forever, and he was alone.

>Sniffing slightly, he peered into the water. For a moment, he could see his own reflection; then it metamorphosed into that a smiling girl. She was no longer a child of five but instead appeared to be fifteen. Her long hair was brown, and her eyes were the same blue-green color as his.

>Staring down at the face, he found a small smile tugging at his lips. She looked much like he remembered her, all though the normally cheery grin had been replaced by a wiser, sadder smile.

>Looking down at her, he felt guilty for his outburst at Master Qui-Gon. Of course she would not be angry that he had lived while she had died. He needn't feel guilty about it. And although they were apart now, someday they could once more be together.

>Her smile changed somewhat. He could read her smiles as easily as if she had spoken. This one said, 'Good going, Ben. You're not as dumb as you look.'

>Ben. Yes, once that had been his name. But now...perhaps little Ben had died with his sister, and he was now this new person--Obi-Wan.

>Looking up, he noticed a sick-looking bird drifting through the air. With its last ounce of strength it collapsed at his feet. Its once red-gold plumage was now dark and dingy, and some of the feathers were falling out. Suddenly it burst into flame and died. Obi-Wan looked at the bird, one of the many which flew freely throughout the gardens, and knew what he had to do.

>He ran to the path that led to the top of the waterfall. Below him he could see his master, Master Windu, and Master Yoda. They looked up at him apprehensively (well, all except for Master Yoda, who simply looked up at him and waited). Perhaps they thought that he would jump off and kill himself. That thought made him chuckle to himself.

>Instead, he threw the ashes into the air. At once a magnificent bird with beautiful red-gold feathers flew off. Then he jumped off the rock, and landed, unharmed in front of Master Qui-Gon.

>No words were exchanged as Qui-Gon wrapped his arms around the boy, who turned from the embrace only once to watch the bird fly through

the air.

>"For you, Becca," he whispered. <p><p>

End
file.